# MENCKEN AND THE 'PATRIOTEERS': ON THE HISTORY OF A WORD

BY FREDERICK BETZ

When American troops returned recently from the Gulf War and marched in a victory parade in Los Angeles, accompanied by a massive display of war planes, "Patriot" missiles, and M1 tanks, critics compared the celebration to the traditional military May Day parades in Moscow and asked whether it was a demonstration of "Patriotism or Profiteering?"[1] The question presumably contrasts the positive "love for or devotion to one's country"[2] with the negative making of "what is considered an unreasonable profit esp. on the sale of essential goods during times of emergency."[3] As criticism, however, the question could also imply a negative intensification of both terms or an interrelationship between patriotism and profiteering, i.e. between either "zealous" or "insincere" patriotism[4] and the making of "excessive profits,"[5] especially in time of war.[6] While the "profiteer" is clearly understood to be "a contemptible person in the activity denoted by the first root,"[7] the "zealous" or "insincere" patriot is usually identified with more subtlety in ironic context[8] or set off with less subtlety in quotation marks,[9] or he is characterized as a "super" or "professional" patriot,[10] or denounced most obviously as a "chauvinist" or "jingoist."[11]

[1] NBC Nightly News, Sunday, May 19, 1991.

[2] Cf. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1975), p. 840

[3] Ibid., p. 919.

[4] Cf. *Webster's* (1975), p. 840 and p. 1652 (re zealous, zealot); *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed., 1989), Vol. XI, p. 349.

[5] Cf. *Webster's New World Dictionary* (²1980), p. 1135.

[6] Cf. *OED*, Vol. XII, p. 581; *The Nation* (July 15/22, 1991), p. 130: "[Patriotism] is the cover word for keeping the war machine tuned."

[7] Cf. *Suffixes and Other Word-Final Elements of English*. ed. Laurence Urdang, Detroit: Gale Research Co., 1982, p. 221.

[8] Cf. *OED*, Vol. XI, p. 349; *The Nation* (July 15/22, 1991), p. 104: "Haven't the patriots been reading the news? The age of nations is past." See also examples below.

[9] Cf., e.g., letter to the editor of *The Southern Illinoisan* (Carbondale) for March 13, 1991 on the Gulf War: "The 'war' is over, the 'hawks' and 'patriots' have won and can now cheer." See also Francis L. Carsten (1982) on "so-called patriots'" (p. 5 below).

[10] Cf., e.g., reference to "these super patriotic times" in *The Southern Illinoisan*, opinion editorial for April 4, 1991; also examples below.

[11] Cf. *OED*, Vol. III, p. 62; Vol. VIII, p. 242; references to "aggressive chauvinism" (p. 103) and "jingoistic patriotism" (p. 107) in *The Nation* (July 15/22, 1991). See also examples below.

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Today the term "profiteer" is rather common,[12] but the comparable form "patrioteer" appears to be quite rare. Although it is used by one of the one hundred representatives of the liberal left invited to respond to the question "What is Patriotism?" in the 125th anniversary issue of *The Nation* (July 15/22, 1991),[13] the word is not to be found in standard dictionaries since *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary* (1964, p. 1314). Urdang (1982) lists "patrioteer" among examples for the pejorative connotation of the suffix (p. 221), but the *OED* (2nd ed., 1989, Vol. V, p. 77) does not, and, oddly enough, neither lists "profiteer"! Whereas the *OED* gives the citations for "profiteer" up to 1980 (Vol. XII, p. 581), its last citation for "patrioteer," i.e. "one who makes a public display of patriotism; one whose patriotism is spurious and insincere" (Vol. XI, p. 349), is from the year 1956. This citation from C. Wright Mills' *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956) refers in context to "patrioteer essayists" as unnamed "official commentators," who "like to contrast the ascendancy in totalitarian countries of a tightly organized clique with the American system of power" (p. 271), which, according to Mills, is anachronistically characterized as a "balance" of "power elites" (cf. pp. 242–68, esp. p. 266). "But," as Mills comments, "that was an American of a century ago, and in the century that has passed, the American elite have not remained as patrioteer essayists have described them to us [...] We are well beyond the era of romantic pluralism" (p. 271).

The preceding *OED*-citation from David Riesman's *Individualism Reconsidered And Other Essays* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1954) refers in both historical and textual context to the menace of McCarthyism in the 1950's, for in his essay, "Some Observations on Intellectual Freedom," in response to an essay on "Loyalty and Freedom," by Archibald Macleish, who "has suffered greatly from patrioteers" (p. 137), Riesman "probe[s] some of the ways in which intellectuals, in fighting for freedom against McCarthyism, can endanger their individuality in a 'united front' interpretation of the contemporary scene" (p. 121). Two months after the senator's infamous Lincoln's Day speech (February 12, 1950) in Wheeling, West Virginia, where McCarthy charged that the State Department was infested with Communists, the threat of McCarthyism is alluded to in a review (not cited in the *OED*) by James M. Cain of Edgar Kemler's book on *The Irreverent Mr. Mencken*: "For we live in troubled times, with the censor, the patrioteer, the bigot in full cry once more. And one wonders who the big bull elephant will be to smash at them hard again, and whether there ever will be another one quite as big, quite as brave, quite as mad, as Mencken."[14] Just why the word "patrioteer" has apparently rarely been used since the 1950's, during many years of the Cold War, would be difficult, if not impossible, to explain without speculation. Tracing this uncommon word back to the earliest sources to be found so far, however, one discovers that it is used 1) generally in similar ways or contexts around World War I and World War II; 2) particularly after World War I by Mencken and critics (like James M. Cain) who associated with or wrote about him.

The *OED*'s citation from *Time* magazine for February 27, 1939 (p. 9), shortly before the outbreak of World War II, is the only

[12] Cf. e.g., *Webster's New World Dictionary* (³1988), p. 1074; *Newsweek* magazine (Dec. 24, 1990), *The Southern Illinoisan* (May 27, 1991), and the London *Times* (Feb. 2, 1991).

[13] Walter Dean Burnham, Professor of Government at the University of Texas, uses the plural "patrioteers" to refer to "the House Un-American Activities Committee, Senator Joseph McCarthy and their latter-day successors" (p. 79), as well as the gerund "patrioteering" to characterize the "sort of patriotism [...] that prompted John Quincy Adams to comment that whenever he saw a politician start to wave the flag, he felt an "involuntary apprehension of mischief" (Ibid.).

[14] Cf. *The New York Times Book Review* for April 16, 1950, p. 1; reprinted in James M. Cain, *60 Years of Journalism*, ed. Roy Hoopes, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1985, pp. 61/2. According to Hoopes, Cain, who first met Mencken in 1922 and contributed to *The American Mercury* (1924 ff.), "considered writing a book about Mencken," and although he "never did," he "helped" other Mencken biographers by sending them information (pp. 17/18).

one that gives an explicit definition of the term: "By patrioteer *Time* means to describe the professional patriot, the kind of refuge-seeking scoundrel who waves a red-white&-blue handkerchief when he should be wiping his own nose." The editor's definition is in answer to a letter from a reader reacting to an article in *Time* for February 6, 1939, specifically to the passage: "Last week C.I.O.'s Pacific Coast leader, longshoreman Harry Bridges, whom patrioteers have tried to get deported as an alien and a Communist, [...]" (p. 9). In his letter the reader asks:

> Please, what do you mean by patrioteer? And when you tell me, will you say if you mean that such are all who wish to see Harry Bridges deported? If you tell me this, tell me, too, what has happened to our feeling for the fine word patriot, that in this country, and, so far as I know, only in this country, people are ashamed of it and so often give it the sneering inflexion? I am touchy (*Time*, Feb. 27, 1939, pp. 8/9).

In his response (and defense) the editor follows his definition with two more points, namely, that *Time* knows of no inventory of those who wish to see Harry Bridges deported, and that "*Time* too thinks patriot is a fine word," (p. 9). The context of the *OED*'s citation suggests that the word "patrioteer" was used in the 1930's to critically or disparagingly refer to zealous anti-Communists or anti-aliens (Germans among others); this is corroborated by the preceding *OED*-citation from the *Baltimore Evening Sun* for April 11, 1935 (p. 27, col. 2), where it is noted that "Some British patrioteer has grown terribly excited over the possibility that Soviet arguments broadcast from Moscow may be so strong [...] as to sweep the masses of Englishmen from their political moorings."[15]

In *Supplement I* (1945) of *The American Language* Mencken also cites the definition of "patrioteer" from *Time* magazine, as quoted, however, from *American Speech* for April 1940 (p. 217), where the parenthetical remark is added: "(not, it may be hoped, with that handkerchief)" (pp. 360/61); no doubt this bit of humorous license, as well as *Time's* definition itself, which includes a paraphrasing of Samuel Johnson's famous definition of patriotism as "the last refuge of a scoundrel,"[16] appealed to Mencken. More important here, though, is his observation that "patrioteer," like "profiteer," is English in origin and that "it was reintroduced to the United States in 1939 by *Time*" (p. 360). The earliest citation in the *OED*, however, is from *American Speech* for (April) 1928: "The second camp is made up of nationalists, or, if you will, of patrioteers." The quotation is from a report on "The International Council for English" (Vol. III, No. 4, pp. 261–75) by Kemp Malone, a professor of English at Johns Hopkins and editor of *American Speech* which he founded with Louise Pound (Nebraska), and Arthur Kennedy (Stanford) in 1925 under the patronage of Mencken.[17] In his work on *The American Language* Mencken often turned to Pound and Malone for advice and help;[18] in fact, Pound, who served with Malone as an American delegate to the International Council in London in June 1927, was one of Mencken's chief defenders, when the first edition was attacked in 1919 by Stuart Sherman (see also below) and others as an "attempt to 'split asunder the two great English-

[15] This citation actually appeared on April 19, 1935 in an anonymous editorial entitled "British Method" (p. 27, col. 2), in which the British government's response to the demand that Soviet broadcasting be "jammed" is used to comment tongue-in-cheek on the "Maryland method" of passing a bill declaring unlawful any broadcast advertising of out-of-state insurance companies not licensed to do business in Maryland.

[16] Cf. Mencken's *New Dictionary of Quotations*, New York: Knopf, 1942, p. 894: "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel" (1775). Mencken also uses the characterization of "the professional patriots" around this time; cf. *The Diary of H.L. Mencken*, ed. Charles A. Fecher, New York; Knopf, 1989, p. 178 (Dec. 29, 1941).

[17] Cf. "American Speech', 1925–1945. The Founders Look Back," *American Speech*, Vol. XX (1945), No. 4 (Dec.), pp. 241–46.

[18] Cf. 4th edition (1936), p. viii.

speaking peoples'."[19] The "nationalists" or "patrioteers" in the *OED*-citation are, in Malone's words, "eaten up by the fear that English will become standardized the world over, will lose its local color and variety, and with this loss, will lose its soul" (p. 262). To these "American" and "English" nationalists, both of whom are also characterized as "100 percenter[s]" (see also below), Malone contrasts the "fatalists," who believe the language will "take care of itself" and that any effort to standardize it is "a waste of time" (p. 261/262), and the "internationalists," who perceive a danger not in standardization, but rather in the possibility that people throughout the English-speaking world "may come to speak so differently that they no longer understand each other" (p. 262). However, standardization was vehemently opposed by English "nationalists" or "patrioteers," whose views on preserving "the purity of the English language" by presenting "a steadily hostile resistance to every American innovation" (p. 272) or by "building a high tariff wall against the slang of America" (p. 274) Malone quotes at length (pp. 270–74) from two anonymous articles (1927, 1928) in the *New Statesman*, which he ranks among "the journals of jingoism" (p. 274).

The *OED*'s earliest citation from *American Speech* (1928) refers, therefore, in context particularly to "linguistic patriotism" (p. 274) in England.[20] Mencken considered the "uproar" over the London conference of 1927 to be one of the high points of the negative "English Attitude Today" (Chapter I, Section 4 in *The American Language*, 4th ed., 1936; cf. *Supplement I*, 1945). His discussion of the Council is based largely on Malone's report (cf. 1936, pp. 32–34; 1945, pp. 61–64); but even though he, too, quotes at length from the *New Statesman* (1927), he does not borrow Malone's characterization of the anonymous author as a "nationalist" or "patrioteer." In Chapter V of the 4th edition of "The Language Today," however, Mencken refers to the origin of the word: "During the World War *patrioteer*, which had been in use in England at least as early as 1913, brought in various words in -eer, but only *profiteer* and *fictioneer* show signs of surviving" (p. 180).[21] In *Supplement I* Mencken notes that "profiteer" is traced by the *OED Supplement* (1933) to 1913 and that it had existed in the verbal form of "profiteering" since 1814 (p. 360); but neither here nor in the 4th edition does Mencken cite any sources for "fictioneer"[22] or "patrioteer"!

Only a systematic survey of primary sources, of representative newspapers, magazines, journals, literary works, and other publications, might reveal use of the word "patrioteer" in England "at least as early as 1913" (Mencken), for a sampling of relevant secondary literature does not. In her "historical review" (sub-title) of *The Pre-War Mind in Britain* (London, 1928), Caroline E. Playne argues that "the war of

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[19] Cf. Isaac Goldberg, *The Man Mencken. A Biographical and Critical Survey* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1925, p. 240; William Manchester, *Disturber of the Peace. The Life of H.L. Mencken*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950, p. 115.

[20] On "linguistic patriotism" in America see, e.g., Kemp Malone, "A Linguistic Patriot," *American Speech*, Vol. I (Oct. 1925), pp. 26–31 (re Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828); Harold Whitehall's review of Mencken's *The American Language: Supplement I* (1945) under the title "Linguistic Patriot" in the *Kenyon Review* 8 (1946), 156–60; reprinted in *Critical Essays on H.L. Mencken*, ed. Douglas C. Stenerson, Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1987, pp. 109–12; Charles Scruggs on the first edition (1919) of *The American Language* in his contribution to *Critical Essays*, p. 197.

[21] In the 23rd printing (1984) of the 4th edition this sentence now reads: "[...], but only *fictioneer* shows any sign of surviving"! Urdang (fn. 7, p. 221), too, lists "fictioneer," but not, as noted above, "profiteer."

[22] The earliest citation for "fictioneer" in the *OED*, Vol. V, p. 873, is from the year 1923. However, Mencken uses the word as early as 1910 in a review of Andreyev's *The Dilemma*, "A Fictioneer of the Laboratory," in the *Smart Set* (July 1910); cf. *H.L.M: The Mencken Bibliography*, comp., Betty Adler (Baltimore, 1961), p. 165. Moreover, the *OED* defines a fictioneer only as "a writer or inventor of fiction," and therefore misses the pejorative reference (cf. also *OED*, Vol. V, p. 77) to "a prolific writer of mediocre fiction" (cf. *Webster's New World Dictionary* (²1980), p. 518), which can also be found in Mencken's literary criticism in 1913, 1914, and, most readily, in his essay on "Theodore Dreiser," which begins: "Out of the desert of American fictioneering, so populous and yet so dreary, Dreiser stands up [...]" (*A Book of Prefaces*, New York: Knopf, 1917, p. 67).

1914 [...] might have been avoided, if nationalism, imperialism and jingoism, the three evil passions closely related," had not taken hold in Britain (p. 21); throughout her critique, inspired largely by John A. Hobson's studies, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London, 1901) and *Imperialism* (New York, 1902), written during the Boer War (1899-1902), Playne uses these three terms interchangeably or in combinations such as "chauvinistic imperialism" (p. 50). Similarly, "patriotism," "imperialism," and "jingoism" represent the critical vocabulary in A.J. Anthony Morris' study of *Radicalism Against the War (1906-1914). The Advocacy of Peace and Retrenchment* (Totowa: Rowman & Littlefield, 1972). In his book, *The Rise of the Anglo-German Antagonism 1860-1914* (London, 1980), however, Paul M. Kennedy characterizes critics of peace societies and Socialists in Britain and Germany as "hyper-patriots" (p. 372) or "arch-patriots" (pp. 380, 381); in his study of *War Against War. British and German Radical Movements in the First World War* (London, 1982), Francis L. Carsten notes that "the police did not interfere [...] when so-called 'patriots' broke up anti-war meetings" in 1917 (p. 171) Samuel Hynes, finally, refers in his recent book on *A War Imagined. The First World War and English Culture* (New York, 1991) to "patriot-journalists" (p. 83), "patriotic poets" (p. 109), "ultra-patriotic journals" (p. 146), "profiteers" (p. 308), and the satiric painting (1918) by C.W.R. Nevinson entitled 'War Profiteers' (pp. 197/198).

Critics of the Spanish-American War (1898) also denounced U.S. "imperialism" or "jingoism,"[23] but by the presidential election of 1916 and the entry of the United States into the "Great War" in April 1917, the vocabulary had become more specifically nationalistic: now it was "Americanism" (Wilson) or "one-hundred percent Americanism" (Theodore Roosevelt),[24] which demanded "undivided loyalty" and incited "one-hundred percent American patriots" against "hyphenated-Americans" (esp. German-Americans) or "disloyal" (esp. pro-German) Americans.[25] In the post-war years, particularly during the Red Scare of 1919/1920, the same vocabulary was also used by "super patriots" or "professional patriots" or by patriotic societies and organizations against suspected Bolshevist or Socialist sympathizers.[26]

In his well-known battles with the "Anglo-Saxon majority"[27] over America's entry into the war against Germany, over patriotism and loyalty, literature (esp. Dreiser) and culture, morality and censorship,[28] Mencken, too, does not appear to use the word "patrioteer(s)," but rather such variations of "the patriots" (1916, 1919, 1920, 1925)[29] as "self-seeking patriots" (1915),[30] "professional patriots"

[23] Cf., e.g., Barbara Tuchman, *The Proud Tower. A Portrait of the World Before the War 1890-1914*, New York: Bantam Books, 1967, esp. pp. 168, 172; William Manchester, *Controversy And Other Essays in Journalism 1950-1975*, Boston/Toronto: Little, Brown & Co., 1976, esp. p. 86.

[24] Re Wilson cf. David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1980, p. 12; re Roosevelt cf. Mencken, *The American Language*, 4th ed. (1936), p. 174; *Suppl. I* (1945), p. 302.

[25] Cf. Mencken, *A New Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 564; Kennedy (fn. 24), p. 12; Merle Curti, *The Roots of American Loyalty*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1946, pp. 228-39.

[26] Cf. Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study of National Hysteria*, 1919-1920, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1955, Chs. 6 and 13; pp. 282-96. (Note on Sources).

[27] Cf. Stenerson's Introduction to *Critical Essays* (1987), p. 5.

[28] Cf., e.g., Stenerson, *H.L. Mencken. Iconoclast from Baltimore*, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 1971, Ch. 6; Richard Rutland, *The Rediscovery of American Literature, Premises of Critical Taste, 1900-1940*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967, Chs. 2-4; William H. Nolte, *H.L. Mencken. Literary Critic*, Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1966, Ch. 9, Carl Bode, *Mencken*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1969; Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986, Chs. 7 and 9 (pp. 168-70).

[29] Cf. *Dreiser-Mencken Letters. The Correspondence of Theodore Dreiser and H.L. Mencken 1907-1945*, ed. Thomas P. Riggio, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986, Vol. I, p. 248; *Letters of H.L. Mencken*, ed. Guy J., Forgue, New York, Knopf, 1961, pp. 165, 175; *A Book of Burlesques*, New York: Knopf, 1920, pp. 227-29; "Autobiographical Notes-1925," p. 105 (quoted with permission of the Enoch Pratt Free Library).

[30] Cf. *Letters* (1961), p. 76.

(1919, 1920/22),[31] or "profiteers disguised as patriots" (1921).[32] Mencken's particular contribution to the critical vocabulary of the time, however, is his characterization of such adversaries as Anthony Comstock, John Sumner, or Stuart Sherman as "Puritans" (1913 ff.)[33] or "professional Puritans" (1917),[34] who are also described as "professional patriots" (1919)[35] or "professional sinhounds" (1917),[36] "100 percent" or "Anglo-Saxon Americans" (1923, 1924),[37] "right-thinkers" (1915, 1920) or "uplifters" (1916).[38]

The word "patrioteer(s)" also does not appear to be used in relevant (modern) scholarship. In his article on "H.L. Mencken and the First World War" (1976), Merritt W. Moseley, Jr. refers to the "patriots" and "Puritans," the "jingoism" and the "chauvinism" of these years.[39] Vincent Fitzpatrick (1987) notes that both Dreiser and Mencken "suffered badly at the hands of jingoistic critics during World War I."[40] Douglas C. Stenerson (1987) writes that in increasingly "sharp conflict," with "superpatriotism" and "intolerance," Mencken "was abused, vilified, and forced into silence on war issues."[41] Indeed, after April 1917 the *Smart Set*, *Seven Arts*, and the *New York Evening Mail* were the only magazines and newspapers that remained open to him (Ibid.). However, *Seven Arts*, which published "The Dreiser Bugaboo," was terminated in the fall of 1917,[42] and the publisher of the *New York Evening Mail*, to which Mencken contributed well over a hundred essays in 1917/18, including some of his most enduring pieces (e.g., "The Sahara of the Bozart" and the bathtub hoax), was arrested in July 1918 as a German agent, and the new management closed the newspaper to Mencken.[43]

*(To be continued)*

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[31] Ibid., p. 146; "The National Letters," *Prejudices: Second Series*, New York: Knopf, 1920, p. 50; "Star-Spangled Men" (1920/1922: *Prejudices: Third Series*, p. 144), *A Mencken Chrestomathy*, (1949), New York: Vintage Books, 1982, p. 605, fn. 11 (re the Vigilantes); see also fn. 12 (re A. Mitchell Palmer, spy hunts, and censorship of the mails).

[32] Cf. "The Land of the Free," *Smart Set*, LXV (May 1921), pp. 138/39, quoted by Stenerson (1971), p. 179.-Note also Willie Woollcott's satirical song, "I Am a One Hundred Percent American," a standby of Mencken's Saturday Night Club, which includes the line, "I am a super patriot" (cf. "*Ich kuss die Hand*," *"The Letters of H.L. Mencken to Gretchen Hood.* ed. Peter W. Dowell, University of Alabama Press, 1986, p. 38, n. 2). Mencken dates this song 1920 in his *New Dictionary of Quotations*, p. 37.

[33] Cf. *The Young Mencken. The Best of His Work*, ed. Carl Bode, New York: The Dial Press, 1973, pp. 302, 313, 354, 369ff., 500; *Dreiser-Mencken Letters*, Vol. I, pp. 245/46.

[34] Cf. "Puritanism as a Literary Force," *A Book of Prefaces* (1917), p. 252.

[35] Cf. *Dreiser-Mencken Letters*, Vol II, p. 330.

[36] Cf. "Puritanism as a Literary Force" p. 243.

[37] Cf. "The American Tradition" (1923), *Prejudices: Fourth Series* (1924), pp. 27, 38; "Adventures Among Books," *Smart Set* (March 1923), quoted by Nolte (fn. 28), p. 156.

[38] Cf. *Dreiser-Mencken Letters*, Vol. I, pp. 205, 224/25; "The National Letters" (fn. 31), p. 22.

[39] Cf. *Menckeniana*, No. 58 (Summer 1976), pp. 8-15.

[40] Cf. "Private Voices of Public Men: The Mencken-Dreiser Transcriptions," *Critical Essays* (1987), p. 169; also *H.L. Mencken*, New York: Continuum, 1989, p. 8.

[41] Cf. Intro. to *Critical Essays*, p. 5.

[42] Cf. Bode (fn. 28), p. 98.

[43] Ibid., p. 116.

# MENCKEN AND THE 'PATRIOTEERS': ON THE HISTORY OF A WORD

*(continued from Spring 1992 issue)*

BY FREDERICK BETZ

As William Manchester reports in his biography, *Disturber of the Peace* (1950), Mencken's relations with the *Mail* had been "stormy" (p. 104), for the newspaper, "trembling under the censorship act," had "returned article after article, usually on the ground that the contents were unpatriotic" (p. 105), and "even the harmless articles the *Mail* [had] printed stirred up the flag-wavers" (Ibid.). Manchester's reference to Mencken's "battles with the *Mail* and the patrioteers" (p. 106), therefore, places use of the word in 1917/18; this dating is corroborated by two more references to "patrioteers" in Manchester's biography. In explaining how Willard Huntington Wright had lost his job at the *Mail* after being investigated for suspicious (anti-American) activities (actually a hoax, for which Mencken never forgave him), Manchester quotes from an undated letter to Ernest Boyd and comments:

> Note, if you please, the tone of Mencken's letter to Boyd. It was written by a man who had been hurt beyond belief by those he scorned and had sworn to give them no further excuse to attack while the war continued, not even if he must deny his friends and leave unscarred his critical targets. However much the patrioteers might later regret it, they had temporarily shut him up (p. 110).

In the *Letters of H.L. Mencken* (1961) this letter is tentatively dated "[late September 1917?]" (p. 109); in *The New Mencken Letters* (1977) Mencken's account of "Wright's downfall" (p. 78) in a letter to Burton Rascoe is similarly dated [October? 27?, 1917]" (p. 77), with the footnote commentary that Wright had played his "trick" "a fortnight earlier" (p. 78). The third reference to "patrioteers" in Manchester's biography concerns Mencken's *Damn! A Book of Calumny*, which Philip Goodman published in New York in 1918. Mencken's preface, dated July 1918, reveals that against his own wishes Goodman had insisted on the shocking expletive in the title, which had "not only libelled" the book, "but [had] also brought down upon it the indignation of the right-thinking" (pp. v/vi). "Shortly after publication," as Manchester relates, "it was furiously beset by patrioteers who demanded its suppression; letters were written the Justice Department, complaining that the author had accused George Washington of fornication" (p. 104). What had evidently so upset "patrioteers" was the first piece in the volume entitled "Pater Patriae" (pp. 13–15), in which Mencken debunks the idealized view of Washington as Father of Our Country by demonstrating how his personal conduct would have run him afoul of what Mencken considered to be pernicious laws passed in the 20th century.[44] For such heresy Mencken "was actually investigated," as he disclosed to Ernest Boyd on July 23, 1918 (cf. *Letters*, p. 124).

Manchester not only had numerous interviews and frequent correspondence with Mencken, but also kept elaborate notes on all their contacts.[45] Since, moreover, *Disturber of the Peace* is written in the spirit and style of Mencken,[46] it is quite possible that the biographer picked up the word "patrioteer(s)" from his subject. At any rate, Mencken's use of the word is documented in one of the "assorted pamphlets" Manchester had received from Mencken and lists in his "Bibliographical Note" (p. 322), but does not specifically mention

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[44] Cf. Edward A. Martin, *H.L. Mencken and the Debunkers*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984, pp. 101/2.

[45] Cf. *Controversy And Other Essays in Journalism* (fn. 23), p. 405.

[46] Cf. Charles A. Fecher, *Mencken, A Study of His Thought*, New York: Knopf, 1978, pp. 26/27; Stenerson, *Critical Essays*, p. 13.

in the text. The pamphlet in question is entitled simply *H.L. Mencken* and contains two essays by Burton Rascoe ("Fanfare," pp. 3–15) and Vincent O'Sullivan ("The American Critic," pp. 16–20) as well as a bibliography of primary and secondary Mencken literature (pp. 21–32) compiled by F. C. Henderson (a pseudonym for Mencken).[47] It was published by Alfred A. Knopf in the summer of 1920[48] and was designed to help promote the re-emergence of Mencken[49] after his "period of public silence" between July 1918 and February 1920, when he began writing again for the *Sunpapers*.[50]

Parts I and II (pp. 3–7) of Rascoe's essay consist of passages from his review under the same title of Mencken's *A Book of Prefaces* (1917), which had appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on November 11, 1917. Part III (pp. 7–15) contains passages (pp. 9/10) from a lengthy "Addendum on Aims" which Mencken had sent to Rascoe for the expanded and updated version of "Fanfare." In the *Letters* (1961) this "Addendum" (pp. 184–90) is tentatively dated "[Summer 1920?]" (p. 184). Commenting on Mencken's "Note on my relations to Nathan" in the Addendum (p. 185), Carl Bode (1969/86) surmises that it was "probably written late in 1919" (p. 413). However, references to the "London Athenaeum" review of *Prejudices* (p. 184)[51] and to the imminent publication of *The American Credo* ("in a few weeks") and *Heliogabalus* ("within the week")[52] in a list attached to the copy of the undated Addendum in the Rascoe Collection in the University of Pennsylvania Library suggest that Mencken wrote it sometime in January 1920. Under the heading "Critical" (pp. 188–90) Mencken notes: "I am, tested by the prevailing definitions, a bad American. I do not believe the country has the glorious future that patrioteers talk of.[...] The sort of country they conjure up would be simply a paradise of bounders, forward-lookers, right-thinkers, all sorts of stupid cowards" (p. 188). In his commentary Rascoe, who had followed his "Fanfare" review (1917) with "a terrific blast at Sherman" in 1918,[53] defends Mencken "as essentially American (as Vincent O'Sullivan has pointed out) as pumpkin pie" (p. 10) and "as probably the only living American patriot" (p. 11).

O'Sullivan's essay was first published in the London *New Witness* for November 28, 1919; in his letter of December 20, 1919 to Ernest Boyd Mencken reports that it "comes just in time to counteract some furious attacks at home," where "all the patriots are stirred up" (*Letters*, p. 165), where, that is, as he relates to Louise Pound on January 14, 1920, "Prejudices' [First Series] has been very violently attacked by Stuart Sherman *et al.*" (*Letters*. p. 168). In his review O'Sullivan not only characterizes Mencken "as peculiarly American as pumpkin-pie" (p. 17), but also considers him to be "the first American critic, except Poe" (Ibid.), and concludes:

> Against patrioteering, against fraud and violence and tyranny disguised as freedom, against the hand of the oppressor wrapped in the cap of liberty, against words that are froth, against a crafty hypocrisy which is the death of all originality in art, against uniformity, against the dead level, against erecting the mediocre opinions of the majority into canons of art, against a mean flattery of the mob and playing down to it—against these Mr. Mencken has always nobly and bravely contended, and doubtless will contend for many years more, for he is still a young man,

[47] Cf. *HLM-Bibliography* (1961), pp. 274, 348.

[48] Cf. Mencken to Burton Rascoe on May 6, 1920: "I expect the pamphlet proofs very shortly" (*The New Mencken Letters*, ed. Carl Bode, New York: The Dial Press, 1977, p. 124); Dreiser to Mencken on Sept 7, 1920: "I see by the pamphlet, concerning you (Fanfare) that you are 40 this 12th day of Sept." (*Dreiser-Mencken Letters*, Vol. II, p. 387).

[49] Cf. Goldberg (fn. 19), pp. 216/17, where it is also noted that it "was very soon exhausted" and had therefore already become a collector's item.

[50] Cf. Bode, p. 173.

[51] Cf. *Letters* (1961), p. 175 (appeared Jan. 2, 1920).

[52] Cf. Mencken to Ernest Boyd on Jan. 26, 1920 (*Letters*, pp. 171/72).

[53] Cf. Manchester, *Disturber of the Peace*, p. 102, concerning Rascoe's satirical review of Sherman's book *On Contemporary Literature* (1917), "Prof. Sherman Gives Asylum to His Brood," *Chicago Tribune*, Jan. 12, 1918.

and these evils are likely to last our time (p.20).

Most likely it was to this rhetorical flourish Mencken was alluding in self-conscious appreciation, when he wrote to Boyd about "a gaudy article on me by Vincent O'Sullivan" (*Letters*, p. 165), but whether Mencken's use of the noun "patrioteers" in his Addendum to Rascoe was suggested to him by O'Sullivan's use of the gerund "patrioteering" (for which there are no citations in the *OED*) cannot be determined. It must also remain open as to whether O'Sullivan, who was born (1868) in New York City, coined the word or picked it up in England, where he studied (Oxford) and lived (London) for many years before 1914, or in the United States, where he spent the first years of the war before returning to Europe (France) in 1918.[54]

Even though Mencken did "not believe the country [had] the glorious future that patrioteers talk[ed] of" (Addendum, 1920), he "remain[ed] on the dock," as he noted in his essay "On Being An American" (*Prejudices: Third Series*, 1922), "wrapped in the flag, when the Young Intellectuals set sail" (p. 11). Speaking for his generation, Harold E. Stearns (born 1891), who was soon to become an expatriate, had declared in his book, *America and the Young Intellectual* (New York, 1921), that they disliked "almost to the point of hatred and certainly to the point of contempt, the type of people dominant in our present civilization" (pp. 11/12). In the spring of 1921 Stearns also organized a symposium of thirty-three intellectuals, whose contributions appeared later that year in a volume entitled *Civilization in the United States* (New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1922). This "manifesto for the new generation" was also, as Carl Bode has observed, "a testimonial to the reach of Mencken's influence in the 1920's, "for the three major contentions of the essays, as summarized by Stearns in his Preface (dated July 4, 1921), "had the flavor of Mencken" (Bode, p. 165): "First, that in almost every branch of American life there is a sharp dichotomy between preaching and practice"; "Second, that whatever else American civilization is, it is not Anglo-Saxon, [...]"; "Third, that the most moving and pathetic fact in the social life of America to-day is emotional and aesthetic starvation" (Preface, pp. vi/vii). Moreover, Mencken, who contributed the essay on "Politics," helped Stearns to find a number of the other contributors, among whom, however, Bode names only his close friends, George Jean Nathan ("The Theatre") and Ernest Boyd ("As an Irishman Sees It").

Stearns' autobiography, *The Street I Know*, (New York, 1935), reveals that Mencken had also tapped Paul de Kruif, then a young bacteriologist at the Rockefeller Institute, "for the ticklish topic of medicine" (p. 194). In his own memoir, *The Sweeping Wind* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1962), de Kruif, who subsequently served as technical adviser to Sinclair Lewis for his satire on medical science, *Arrowsmith* (1925), and published his own bestseller, *Microbe Hunters* (1926), explains that he had sought Mencken's advice in October 1919 "as to whether a young scientific man should dare to try popular writing on the side" (p. 7). With Mencken's encouragement, de Kruif first wrote "a sketch—satirical in a style deriving from Mencken—examining the scientific pretenses of an eminent professor," which, however, his "new mentor" did not think "good enough for his *Smart Set* (Ibid.). In fact, "the first writing money" de Kruif was to earn (p. 30) was for the essay on "Medicine" for "a book," as Stearns must have described it to him,[55] "seriously laughing at so-called civilization in our country" (p. 29). It was an opportunity and challenge de Kruif could not resist:

> I was no M.D. What did I know about the art and science of medicine? All I knew was that

[54] Cf. Vincent O'Sullivan, *Opinions*. With an Introduction by Alan B. Anderson, London, 1959, pp. 7–16.

[55] Cf. Stearns' Preface, p. viii.

> America had many eminent doctors using many medicines and that with the medicines the doctors did not cure many people. Doctors were priests, medicine men, layers on of hands, exponents of the bedside manner—that was my brash estimate of their noble profession. This tickled Harold Stearns (p. 30).

Under the circumstances it is understandable that de Kruif insisted on anonymity to protect his job (Ibid.). Indeed, this lone anonymous essay in the volume (pp. 443–56), conspicuously written in the spirit and satirical style of Mencken, aroused suspicion in the medical community that contrary to the statement, in the "Who's Who of the Contributors," that the author was "an American physician who [had] gained distinction in the field of medical research, but who for obvious reasons desire[d] to have his name withheld" (p. 559), "was not a physician at all."[56]

If anything was literally a "hoax" (see below) in the volume, then, it was the characterization of the anonymous author of the essay on "Medicine"; it lends some credence to Burton Rascoe's account of Stearns' Symposium in his memoirs, *Before I Forget* (New York, 1937) and *We Were Interrupted* (Garden City, N.Y., 1947). Rascoe, who had moved from Chicago to New York in April 1921 to become associate editor of *McCall's* magazine (1947, p. 80), was invited to contribute an essay on the movies, but when Joel E. Spingarn, vice-president of Harcourt, Brace & Co. and contributor of the essay on "Scholarship and Criticism," asked Rascoe to tone down what he thought was an "intemperate" attack on the movies, Rascoe refused and his essay (cf. "The Motion Pictures: An Industry, Not An Art" in the *Bookman* for November 1, 1921) was dropped from the volume (1947, pp. 104–107). Stearns makes no mention of Rascoe in his autobiography; but in his memoirs Rascoe not only ridicules the "lugubrious seriousness" of "Stearns and a few of the others" (1947, p. 106), but also challenges the veracity of Stearns' account. In *The Street I Know* Stearns recalls that he had finally "managed to persuade" Ring Lardner to contribute an essay on "Sport and Play," but that he "had to see" Lardner "several times before he was quite convinced that the whole thing wasn't a hoax, which Mencken, of course, solemnly assured him it was" (pp. 200/1). Rascoe quotes Stearns here only as far as the words "several times," and then goes on to claim that he, not Stearns, had actually approached both Lardner and Frank M. Colby ("Humour") for their essays (1937, pp. 421/22). And to further discredit Stearns, Rascoe attributes both purpose and tone of the Symposium to others: "Mencken and Nathan had each written to me about it while I was still in Chicago, and both of them took the symposium as a huge practical joke upon the professional patriots, the reformers and the public in general. Mencken wrote me that it was a buffoonery in which 'some professors and New Republicans' were to be dragged in as contributors to make the thing sound authentic" (Ibid., p. 421). In *We Were Interrupted* Rascoe reformulates this statement, which now reads: "Mencken, Nathan, and Boyd considered the whole thing a practical joke designed to rouse the ire of the patrioteers, go-getters, and the booboisie and make them squeal" (p. 106).

*(To be concluded)*

[56] Cf. "A Literary Diagnosis by Exclusion," an anonymous review in the *Medical Times* for March 1922, in Mencken's collection of newspaper clippings (Vol. 5, p. 161) in the Pratt Library, which would also suggest that Mencken had an unusual interest in this particular essay in the volume. On Mencken's interest in medicine see Bode (1969/86), pp. 104/5, 116, 137, 144/45, 213, 226, 247 (*re* de Kruif); Manchester, *Controversy*, p. 407.

# MENCKEN AND THE 'PATRIOTEERS': ON THE HISTORY OF A WORD

*(continued from Summer 1992 issue)*

BY FREDERICK BETZ

No letters from Mencken to Rascoe in early 1921 concerning the Symposium could be found in the Rascoe Collection at the University of Pennsylvania. Although Stearns refers in his autobiography to a letter in which "Mencken wrote that he was attracted by what he was pleased flippantly to term a "hoax" (p. 193), no such letter could be located in the New York Public Library or the Princeton University Library either. Moreover, Mencken hardly mentions the Symposium elsewhere: in his letter of May 28, 1921 to Louise Pound he characterizes it merely as "a vast 36 [sic]-barrelled gun that Harcourt is to publish in the Autumn" (*Letters*, p. 225). In light of the controversy over Rascoe's *Smart Set Anthology* in 1934[57] and Rascoe's bitterness towards Mencken for what he felt was Mencken's "reluctance to acknowledge any indebtedness" for the "campaign" he had "waged in his behalf from 1917 through 1920 on the *Chicago Tribune*."[58] one might conclude that Rascoe also deliberately ignored what appears to be Mencken's ironic use of the word "hoax" or what has been generally characterized as the double perspective of ridicule and concern in the writings of Mencken and other debunkers in the early 1920's.[59] Nevertheless, the list of contributors to the Symposium (pp. 559–64) does include eight professors, five former professors, and four members from the staff of the *New Republic*; the vocabulary in both of Rascoe's statements is characteristic of Mencken, who actually coined the word "booboisie," but not until February 1922, when Ernest Boyd, Harry C. Black, and he made up a list of words "to describe the victims of the Depression then current" (*The American Language* [4th ed.], p. 560, n.1).

In the list of contributors to *Civilization in the United States* it is noted that Ernest Boyd had "translated Heinrich Mann's *Der Untertan* for the European Library" (p. 559). *Der Untertan*, a devastating satire on the German bourgeois as the obsequious but opportunistic loyal subject of Kaiser Wilhelm II in the 1890's, had appeared in serial publication from January to August 1914, when, at the outbreak of the war, editor and author, anticipating censorship, agreed to abruptly terminate publication without any explanation to readers that approximately the last fifty pages of the novel were being suppressed. In 1916 the Kurt Wolff Verlag (München, Leipzig, Wien) assumed the rights to publish Heinrich Mann's collected works to date; after reading the manuscript of *Der Untertan* and enthusiastically comparing it to Blazac's and Zola's social novels dealing with the First and Second Empires in France, the publisher had private copies of the novel distributed to a number of prominent German and Austrian intellectuals opposed to the Kaiser and the war. Shortly after the defeat of Germany *Der Untertan* was published in a first edition of 100,000 copies, which, according to different accounts, were sold in four to six weeks; in the numerous reviews that appeared in late 1918 and throughout 1919 Heinrich Mann's controversial bestseller was either praised as a brilliant satire and prophetic work (prophesying German chauvinism culminating in World War I) or criticized as literary pamphleteering (*literarischer Pam-*

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[57] Cf. esp. Carl R. Dolmetsch, *The Smart Set: A History and Anthology*, New York: The Dial Press, 1966, pp. x/xi; Fitzpatrick in *Critical Essays*, p. 172.

[58] Marginal note in Rascoe's copy of Kemler's Mencken-biography (1950), quoted by Donald M. Hensley, *Burton Rascoe*, New York: Twayne, 1970, p. 136.

[59] Cf. Martin (fn 44), pp. 1–3.

*phletismus*) inspired by the author's hatred of Germany.[60]

Boyd's translation was published in late 1921[61] by Harcourt, Brace and Company; it appeared under the title *The Patrioteer* in the firm's "European Library" series (1920–24), which, according to the general editor, J.E. Spingarn, was "intended to keep Americans in touch with the intellectual and spiritual ferment of [...] Europe to-day, by means of translations" of books which displayed "creative power or a new outlook or more than ordinary interest" and challenged "American standards of taste or morals." Following this announcement inside the back cover of the volume, *The Patrioteer* is characterized as "A German 'Main Street', describing the career of a typical product of militarism, in school, university, business, patriotism, and love." Inside the back cover of the translation of Walther Rathenau's *The New Society*, which had appeared sometime earlier in 1921, Boyd's translation is listed among several volumes in preparation; here it is entitled simply *The Patriot*, and Mann's novel is summarized as "The career of a typical product of militarism, in school, university, business, patriotism, and love, told with a biting incisiveness and irony." With the changes in title and summary it was no longer necessary to explicitly refer to the "biting incisiveness and irony" of the novel, for the *-eer* suffix clearly gave the new title negative or pejorative meaning, and the characterization of *The Patrioteer* as "A German 'Main Street'" was an obvious reference, no doubt for marketing purposes, to Sinclair Lewis' satire on the narrowness and provincialism of middle America, which had also been published by Harcourt, Brace and Company in late 1920 and had become a phenomenal bestseller (180,000 copies sold) in the first half of 1921.[62]

Just exactly when and at whose suggestion the title was changed cannot be determined. The historical archive of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. has no editorial files for *The Patrioteer*; the Joel Spingarn Papers in the New York Public Library contain no correspondence with Boyd concerning his translation. The only time Boyd even mentions it in his extensive correspondence with Mencken, in an unpublished letter dated July 6, 1921, he merely reports that he is "in the short strokes of the Mann book & must hand in the M.S. on the 15th."[63] Reference to "the Mann book" suggests, however, that Boyd had at least mentioned the transaction to Mencken sometime earlier; in light of Burton Rascoe's account of the Symposium on *Civilization in the United States*, it is conceivable that the new title had its origin in conversation between Boyd, who does not appear to use the word "patrioteer(s)" elsewhere in his writings,[64] and Mencken and their circle of friends in the spring of 1921.

Although Boyd and Mencken were in the habit of exchanging publications and reviewing each other's works,[65] Mencken apparently neither received a copy of Boyd's translation[66] nor reviewed it; indeed, there is no mention of Heinrich Mann, *Der Untertan*, or *The Patrioteer* in

[60] Cf. Klaus Schröter, *Heinrich Mann*, Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1967, pp. 79, 88; Jürgen Haupt, *Heinrich Mann*, Stuttgart: Metzler, 1980, pp. 66, 75; Wolfgang Emmerich, *Heinrich Mann: "Der Untertan,"* München: Fink, 1980, pp. 34/35, 127–36.

[61] Cf. Ernest Boyd, "Literature Abroad," *The Literary Review of the New York Evening Post*, Oct. 1, 1921, p. 56: "and novels by Thomas Mann [*Buddenbrooks*] and Heinrich Mann are announced."

[62] Cf. Mark Schorer, *Sinclair Lewis, An American Life*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961, p. 264.

[63] In H.L. Mencken Papers (Box 10) quoted with permission of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Division of The New York Public Library and the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

[64] Cf., e.g., *The Contemporary Drama of Ireland*, Boston, 1917; "American Literature or Colonial?," *Freeman* (March 1920), reprinted in *Critical Essays*, pp. 58–60; "A Modern Reactionary," *Athenaeum* (May 14, 1920), p. 637; "As An Irishman Sees It," *Civilization in the United States* (1922), pp. 489–507; "Ku Klux Kriticism" (1923), *Criticism in America*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1924, pp. 309–20; *H.L. Mencken*, New York, 1925.

[65] Cf. fn. 64; *Letters*, p. 164; *HLM-Bibliography* (1961), p. 173.

[66] At any rate, there is no copy of *The Patrioteer* in the Mencken Collection in the Pratt Library (communication from Vincent Fitzpatrick).

Mencken's letters or literary criticism.[67] This is all the more curious, as Heinrich Mann's satirical novel, exposing in general the philistinism of a provincial German town (Netzig) and in particular the patrioteering and profiteering, the showmanship and charlatanry (esp. in imitation of Kaiser's speech-making), and the hypocrisy and poltroonery of the main character, Diederick Hessling, presumably would have appealed to Mencken, whose essay, for example, on Theodore Roosevelt in 1920[68] or reviews of Sinclair Lewis' novels *Main Street* in 1921 and *Babbitt* in 1922,[69] reveal similar critical interests. A (signed) review of *The Patrioteer* might, however, have given Mencken's "Anglo-Saxon" opponents in America ("Stuart Sherman et al.") the satisfaction of seeing him praise such satirical criticism of Wilhelminian Germany. On the other hand, Mencken may have considered Mann's satire, as advertised or described to him by Boyd, to be inappropriate (untimely, misdirected), and may have therefore simply not read and commented on the novel.

Interestingly enough, the earliest review of *The Patrioteer* to be found so far appeared on January 14, 1922 in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* under the title "An arraignment of German Gods; A Significant Book. 'Der Untertan' translated" (p. 4). However, the anonymous reviewer,[70] who considers *The Patrioteer* to be not only "an excellent novel—far better than 'Main Street,' to which it has been ineptly compared,"[71] but also "a trenchant study of a national state of mind," finds the translation of the title to be inaccurate:

> A literal translation of "Der Untertan," the title of this remarkable novel, would be "The Subject," or, to be still more exact, "one who has been made to serve." This expresses far more accurately than the coined word, "The Patrioteer," the real meaning of the book, for from the first to last it is a story of subjection, the servile submission of a soul to authority. The translator also calls "Der Untertan" the "loyal subject," but an eminent German scholar vouches for the fact that "loyal" is not implied in the word. Certainly there is in the hero, Diederich Hessling, no loyalty to anything that does not advance his own interests. This type belongs to no one nation or epoch, but it flowered in its greatest perfection under the Hohenzollern imperialism.

The "coined word, "The Patrioteer'," is, indeed, not as accurate a translation as "The Subject," which is how Alec W.G. Randall translates the title in his essay on "Main Currents in Contemporary German Literature" in *The Dial* for April 1921 (p. 423), or "The Loyal Subject," which is a literal translation of "ein treuer Untertan" in the text (cf. *The Patrioteer*, pp. 55, 215, 299, 302); but these translations are also inadequate, for they, too, fail to convey both the submissive (*Untertan*) and authoritarian (*Unterdrücker*=oppressor, p. 8) traits of the main character's personality. However, when the reviewer notes that "Herr Buck [a survivor of the failed 1848

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[67] Cf. Markus F. Motsch, "A Dose of Kultur," *Menckeniana*, No. 19 (Fall 1966), pp. 8–11. By contrast, Mencken is reported to have recommended in 1921 that Knopf publish the English translation (cf. fn. 61) of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* (1901); cf. Bode (fn. 21), p. 225.

[68] Cf. "Roosevelt: An Autopsy," *Prejudices: Second Series* (1920), pp. 102–35.

[69] Cf. "The Story of an American Family," *Smart Set* (Jan. 1921) and "Portrait of an American Citizen," *Smart Set* (Oct 1922), reprinted in *H.L. Mencken's "Smart Set" Criticism*, ed. William H. Nolte, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968, pp. 279–85.

[70] The review is signed with the initials or letters "B.C.P.," whose identity remains unknown, since neither history of the *Sunpapers* (Gerald W. Johnson, Frank R. Kent, H.L. Mencken, Hamilton Owens, *The Sunpapers of Baltimore 1837–1937*, New York: Knopf, 1937; Harold A. Williams, *The Baltimore Sun 1837–1987*, Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987) gives an answer and the library at the *Sun* is closed to the public. While "B.C.P." is most likely not Mencken, as he did not write at this time under a pseudonym for the *Sun* or sign his columns with initials (communication from Vincent Fitzpatrick), it is possible that he arranged to have *The Patrioteer* reviewed in *The Evening Sun*.

[71] The anonymous reviewer in the *New York Tribune* for Jan. 22, 1922, Book Section, p. 8 ("Kaiserism. Prussia Attacked in Caustic Novel") also believes that *The Patrioteer* is a better novel than *Main Street*, i.e. more constructive in its criticism and more universal in its appeal. Reference to "the false gods of commercialism and imperialism" also echoes the title of the *Evening Sun*-review, while the characterization of Diederich Hessling as "pre-eminently mob-minded" sounds Menckenian.

revolution and principal liberal adversary of Diederich Hessling in Netzig] stands as a type of the "honorable Germans, open to the older ideals and virtues," who, the author believes, have survived 'even in the kingdom of patrioteers'," he cannot be quoting from the novel, for similar passages in the translation (cf. pp. 249, 259) do not contain the phrase "in the kingdom of patrioteers."[72] In fact, only Diederich Hessling's repeated exclamation in support of the Kaiser, "Hurrah!" (cf. *The Patrioteer*, pp. 54, 107, et passim), suggesting the word "Hurrapatriotismus," coined in the late 19th century,[73] or his use of the word "Chauvinismus" to denounce the French (cf. *The Patrioteer*, p. 380)[74] approximate "patrioteering" in *Der Untertan*.

In his review ("The Underling's Brutality") in *The Literary Review* for February 4, 1922, Ernest Brennecke concludes that *The Patrioteer* "is an important work," for "it puts on record the fact [...] that there were in Germany patriots as well as 'patrioteers'," and: "This translation may also possibly take good effect here. Patrioteering is by no means an undiscovered art in English (and French) speaking countries" (p. 395). "B.C.P." concludes his review in *The Evening Sun* with the similar observation that the novel is perhaps of more value "to those readers of other countries who realize that in the wake of our vanished isolation must come a thorough understanding of the influences and mental states that bring about international catastrophes" (p. 4). Apparently, however, *The Patrioteer* had little impact in America. In his essay on "The Way of the Translator" in *The Literary Review* for December 16, 1922, Boyd complains that the novel, "which created a tremendous stir all over Germany," "might just as well never have existed so far as the American public is concerned" (p. 313). Indeed, Lewis Mumford, who had associated with Boyd in 1921,[75] confessed years later in his fictitious "Letter to A German Writer," in which he recommends *Der Untertan* as the modern German novel comparable to *Main Street*, that he had not even read *The Patrioteer* at the time (*Saturday Review of Literature*, December 8, 1945, p. 8); there is no record that Mencken had read Boyd's translation either. Moreover, *The Patrioteer* was subsequently re-issued under two new titles, *Little Superman* (New York, 1945)[76] and *Man of Straw*, (London/New York, 1947); in the 1947 and the 1984 Penguin Modern Classics paperback edition (*Man of Straw*) Boyd (died 1946) is no longer identified as the translator, nor is any reference even made to the original publication of his translation.

The replacement of the title *The Patrioteer* in the late 1940's anticipates the apparent disappearance of the word "patrioteer" in the late 1950's (cf. *OED*) or 1960's (cf. *Webster's*). Whether the recent appeal to "those with a different concept of patriotism" to "resist all efforts by the patrioteers, those specialists in involving the Idols of the Tribe, to control the meaning of this rich and ambiguous power in the land" (Burnham, 1991), inspires renewed use of the word, remains to be seen. The

[72] Cf. the English translation of an unpublished letter, dated June 27, 1920, from Heinrich Mann to Joel Spingarn, in which, however, the text reads: "in the kingdom of 'Untertanen' " (Joel Spingarn Papers, Box 7, quoted with permission of the Rare Books and Manuscript Division of The New York Public Library and the Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations). Mann's statement of purpose, solicited by Spingarn, must have been distributed with review copies of *The Patrioteer*, for at least two reviewers (B.C.P.; Ernest Brennecke) quote from it.

[73] Cf. Otto Ladendorf, *Historisches Schlagwörterbuch* (1906), Rpt. Hildesheim, 1968, pp. 130/31.

[74] Hessling also accuses the French of crass materialism and unscrupulous business sense (p. 380), which ironically underscores the patrioteering and profiteering he himself so blatantly practices!

[75] Cf. Lewis Mumford, *Sketches from Life, The Autobiography of Lewis Mumford, The Early Years*, New York: The Dial Press, 1982, pp. 366/67, 480–82.

[76] *Little Superman* ironically characterizes the "little" or "typical" German who enthusiastically supported Hitler; cf. F. C. Weiskopf's review ("Making of Nazis") in the *Saturday Review of Literature* for Oct. 20, 1945, p. 30. In his review ("German Insect Patriot") in *The New York Times Book Review* for Dec. 16, 1945 (p. 11) Richard Watts Jr. notes, however, that "since comic strips are currently more widely read than Nietzsche, it is possible that the publishers of this new edition [...] made a mistake in issuing it under the title 'Little Superman'." Watts does not consider *The Patrioteer* a good title either, but thinks that it "at least gave the right idea."

more common terms, "chauvinist" and "jingoist," were coined earlier than "patrioteer" (cf. *OED*) and continue to be used widely today, along with such negative or pejorative variations of "patriot" as "super" or "professional patriot." Whereas the earliest *OED*-citation for "patrioteer" is from the year 1928, Mencken maintains that it was used as early as 1913 in England and during World War I in the United States (cf. *The American Language*). However, Mencken cites no sources, and a preliminary survey does not confirm use of the word in pre-war Britain or in war-time America, although indirect documentation of its use in 1917/18 concerning Mencken's relations with the *New York Evening Mail* and reaction to his *Damn! A Book of Calumny* (1918) can be found in Mencken scholarship (cf. Manchester, 1950). The earliest sources discovered so far are from the year 1919 in England (O'Sullivan) and 1920 in the United States (Mencken, as quoted by Rascoe), when the word is used in defense of Mencken as an American patriot and critic against persistent charges by "patrioteering" adversaries ("Stuart Sherman *et al.*") that he was a disloyal German-American. Use of the word in 1921 is also attributed (by Rascoe, 1947) to Mencken, Nathan, and Boyd, who are reported to have considered Stearns' Symposium on *Civilization in the United States* (1922) "a huge practical joke" on "the patrioteers, go-getters, and the booboisie"; as a result, Boyd quite possibly changed the title of his translation of Heinrich Mann's novel, *Der Untertan* (1918), from *The Patriot* to *The Patrioteer* (1921). Although this title is an inaccurate translation, the main character, Diederich Hessling, is a representative German patrioteer, who shares with his "Anglo-Saxon," British or American, counterparts fear and hatred of (among other foreign and domestic "enemies" of the State) Socialists or Communists; indeed, the word "patrioteer" is often used in this connection, during the Red Scare of 1919/20, the 1930's (cf. *Baltimore Evening Sun*, 1935; *Time*, 1939), and the Red Scare (McCarthyism) of the 1950's (cf. Cain, 1950; Riesman, 1954; Burnham, 1991). The earliest *OED*-citation, finally, referring in context (Kemp Malone in *American Speech*, 1928) to "linguistic patriots" in England vehemently opposed to any influence of American English or British English, can also be related to Mencken, who, as this survey demonstrates, plays a significant role in the history of the "patrioteer."[77]

[77] Two letters received after completion of this essay give further possible evidence of Mencken's influence. Vincent Fitzpatrick reports Gerald W. Johnson's (cf. fn. 70) use of the word in an article entitled "The Tarheel Renascence" in the *Baltimore Evening Sun* for July 30, 1925, in which Johnson writes that the North Carolina educator, Charles Duncan McIver, "was too much a patriot to be patrioteer." Fitzpatrick notes that "at this time in his career, Johnson was very much a disciple of HLM and definitely aped his style" and suggests that "perhaps Johnson encountered this word in Mencken's writing" (letter of Aug. 2, 1991). Walter Dean Burnham relates that he "spent the latter part of [his] growing up in Baltimore, where [he] attended Johns Hopkins University" and "worked with (among others) Professor Malcolm Moos," editor of Mencken's *A Carnival of Buncombe* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956). More specifically, Burnham explains: "H.L. Mencken was always a sentimental favorite in our family, and I have read quite widely in his essays political and cultural. It is quite possible, though I have no conscious recollection of it, that I picked up 'patrioteer' and 'patrioteering' from Mencken. But, since people have sometimes noted that my peculiar writing style has its share of arcane and even archaic words, I would have to take that point and say that it could have come from any one of a thousand or more sources" (letter of Aug. 5, 1991).

# MORE ON MENCKEN AND THE 'PATRIOTEERS'

By Frederick Betz

*Professor Betz's "Mencken and the 'Patrioteers': On the History of a Word" appeared in the Spring, Summer and Fall 1992 issues of* Menckeniana. *This is in the nature of an epilogue to it.*

In the new, third edition (1992) of *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language,* widely acclaimed for its descriptive rather than prescriptive principles of word selection, both the 'profiteer', as "one who makes excessive profits on goods in short supply" (p. 1446), and the 'fictioneer' "one who writes fiction, especially a prolific creator of commercial or pulp fiction" (p. 677), remain in usage, whereas for the 'patrioteer' there is no entry. This word can be found, however, in *The Grand Panjandrum. And 2,699 Other Rare, Useful, and Delightful Words and Expressions* (New York: Collier Books, 1991), compiled by J[ulius] N[icholas] Hook, a former English professor, who defines a 'patrioteer' as "a flag-waver, a chauvinist or jingoist, a person who pretends to great patriotism but uses hiser [= his or her!] assumed love of country for hiser own ends," and cites as an example "patrioteer merchants who wore their lapel flags and spoke of the need for sacrifices but increased the prices of all their goods and kept their sons out of the army" (p. 14).[1]

"Patrioteer merchants" are, in more common terminology, war profiteers, who have flourished in all modern wars, certainly since World War I. In his study of *Fighting Songs and Warring Words. Popular Lyrics of Two World Wars* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990), Brian Murdoch has amply documented the association of 'profiteering' and 'hurrah-patriotism' (see, e.g., pp. 20, 38, 39, 59, 75). While earliest citations for both of these terms have been established,[2] the origin of 'patrioteer' remains unclear. Mencken claims that it was used as early as 1913 in England and during the war years in America, but the earliest direct citations found so far are from 1919/20.[3]

'Patrioteer' is conceivably a translation of the French pejorative term 'patriotard', which is generally translated as 'Jingo' (cf. *The Concise Oxford French Dictionary,* 1934 [1957], p. 614), and for which 'chauvin' and 'cocardier' ('jingoist') are cited as synonyms (cf. *Grand Larousse de la langue française,* 1976, Vol. 5, pp. 4086/87). In the *Trésor de la Langue Française. Dictionnaire de la langue du XIXe et du XXE siècle* (1789–1960), Vol. 12 (1986), p. 1192, the earliest citation is attributed to Georges Clemenceau, who used the word (defined as *"Qui exprime un patriotisme violent, agressif"*) in 1898/99 to refer to 'patrioteers' and 'Anti-Dreyfusards' in the Dreyfus affair. This citation is actually from an article dated July 23, 1898 (a second citation is from July 28, 1898) and reprinted in a collection (see pp. 11, 22) of Clemenceau's daily commentary on the Dreyfus case between July 21 and December 11, 1898, under the title, *Vers la*

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[1] Cf. the same entry in the original edition of *The Grand Panjandrum. And 1,999 Other Rare, Useful, and Delightful Words and Expressions,* New York/London: Collier Macmillan, 1980, p. 12.

[2] Cf. F. Betz, "Mencken and the 'Patrioteers': On the History of a Word," *Menckeniana,* No. 121 (spring 1992), p. 4; No. 123 (fall 1992), p. 14, fn. 73.

[3] Cf. Ibid., No. 123, p. 15.

*réparation* (Paris: Stock, 1899). Unfortunately, this volume does not appear to have ever been translated into English. However, since the Dreyfus case was also covered extensively in both the British and American press,[4] the pejorative term 'patriotards' could possibly have been translated as 'patrioteers' sometime between 1898/99 and 1906, when the Dreyfus case was finally concluded, or sometime before 1913/14.[5]

The anti-Semitism and anti-intellectualism[6] of 'patriotards' in France at the turn of the century are comparable to the fear and hatred 'patrioteers' in England and the United States had of Socialists and Communists.[7] However, definitions of 'patrioteer' focus more generally on the association with 'profiteering', as is implied already in what appears to be the earliest dictionary entry in *The New Century Dictionary of the English Language* (New York/London), published in 1927, one year before the earliest citation in the *OED*:[8] "one who makes a parade of his patriotic spirit or service, esp. in doing what is to his own profit" (Vol. 2, p. 1262).

Explicit association of these terms can be found in the recently published memoirs of H. L. Mencken, *My Life as Author and Editor* (New York: Knopf, 1993), where Mencken recalls in 1945 (cf. pp. 296, 300) that he "was full of plans in those days [1919] for editing a history of the American share in World War I—not the military history, but the record of the spy-hunting, profiteering and patrioteering at home—and [that he] was eager to get to work on it' (p. 299). Mencken "had conceived" the project "on a large scale," and estimated that it would run to thirty volumes or more: "one, for example, to be devoted to the record of the American clergy in the war, another to the war-mongering in the colleges, a fourth [!] to the Liberty loan campaigns, a fifth to the part played by the newspapers and so on and so on" (Ibid.). The "amassing of materials" would have involved "an examination of all the principal American newspapers from 1914 to date, and many of the minor ones" (p. 300). However, for lack of both collaborators and funding, Mencken "had to abandon" his plan, even though he "accumulated [himself] a great mass of newspaper clippings and other documents," which he kept in "the loft of the little pony-stable in Hollins Street" until 1936, when he had a "trash man" take it all away "as waste paper" (Ibid.). While it is understandable that Mencken disposed of all this material when he returned to Hollins Street after his wife's death, it is (in this context) an unfortunate loss, for his collection may have contained documentation of "profiteering and patrioteering" during the war years.

In his biography, *Disturber of the Peace* (1950) William Manchester refers to Mencken's "battles with the *Mail* and the patrioteers" (p. 106), which places use of the word in 1917/18.[9] In *My Life as Author and Editor* Mencken himself explains that "when, in 1917, [he] left the *Sunpapers* and began writing for the New York *Evening Mail,* [he] made language a frequent theme, for [he] was bound by [his] contract to avoid all subjects likely to

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[4] Cf., eg., Barbara W. Tuchman, *The Proud Tower. A Portrait of the World Before the War: 1890–1914,* New York: Bantam Books, 1967, pp. 260/61; Egal Feldman, *The Dreyfus Affair and the American Conscience, 1895–1906,* Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1981.

[5] However, in *The Century Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1903; New York, 1911; New York, 1914) there is no entry for 'patrioteer'. The word is first listed in *The New Century Dictionary of the English Language* (New York/London, 1927); see below.

[6] Cf. esp. Dietz Bering, *Die Intellektuellen. Geschichte eines Schimpfwortes,* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978, Ch. 2 (on the origin, or rather popularization, of the word 'intellectuals' during the Dreyfus affair).

[7] Cf. Betz (1992), No. 123, p. 15.

[8] Ibid., No. 121, p. 3.

[9] Ibid., No. 122 (summer 1992), p. 12.

outrage the plupatriots of the time" ( p. 294). Earlier in his memoirs, but with reference to the year 1918, Mencken recalls that his "closest friend" among the members of the Saturday Night Club, Theodore Hemberger, "was an unnaturalized German, and [that therefore] the plupatriots of the time badgered him constantly" (p. 234). There is no entry for 'plupatriots' in the standard (e.g., the *OED, Webster's*) or specialized (e.g., *The Grand Panjandrum*) dictionaries, nor can it be found in the primary or secondary literature cited in the history of the word 'patrioteers' (cf. Betz, 1992). Clearly a synonym for 'patrioteers' or 'super-patriots',[10] 'plupatriots' could perhaps be added to the list of words coined by Mencken!

[10] Cf. the word 'pluperfect' for the past perfect verb tense, with the literal meaning of 'more than perfect'.

# Bibliographic Check List

By Vincent Fitzpatrick

*(Continued from Fall 1993 Issue)*

MCCALL, CHARLES. Both Parties' Conventions Hilariously Funny, Pitifully Sad. *Bakersfield Californian,* August 30, 1992.

Quotation of HLM's remark that "there is something about a national convention that makes it as fascinating as a revival or a hanging." Dr. McCall says, "Now, presidential nominations are effectively made before the delegates ever assemble. Few of the adjectives Mencken used to describe the meetings are still apt. . . ."

MADDRY, LAWRENCE. Messing with the South's You'all Talk is Akin to Treason. Norfolk *Virginian-Pilot,* August 20, 1992.

Quotation of HLM's remark that "Southern speech is everywhere regarded more tolerantly [than the accents of other parts of the United States] partly because of what the Hartford Courant described as 'the honeyed-languor of the sub-Potomac voice.'"

MAKE PACKWOOD DEBATE THE REAL ISSUES. Astoria (OR) *Daily Astorian,* September 22, 1992.

Senator Robert Packwood "has worked both sides of the street so thoroughly that he reminds one of H. L. Mencken's eulogy of William Jennings Bryan: 'If the fellow was sincere, then so was P. T. Barnum.'"

MASON, FRANKLIN. Raising Cain at the Pratt. Baltimore *Evening Sun,* September 21, 1992.

HLM published Cain's first story, "Pastorale," in the *American Mercury.*